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160
THE LIFE AND TIMES

—OF—

BENEDICT ARNOLD,

FIRST GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND
UNDER THE CHARTER.

A PAPER

**Read by JAMES N. ARNOLD, Historian,
OF PROVIDENCE,**

*Before the Veteran Citizens Historical Association of Providence,
and William Ellery Chapter, D. A. R.,
of Newport.*

NEWPORT, R. I. :
MERCURY PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1901.



Bright Tarn

THE LIFE AND TIMES

— OF —

BENEDICT ARNOLD.

Who founded Rhode Island? Roger Williams, says ninety-nine in a hundred persons. I would like these ninety-nine to show me the authority for that statement. Mr. Williams was at Salem, then a few months at Plymouth, and then back again at Salem. He sailed from Bristol, England, December 1, 1630, and arrived at Boston, the 5th of February, following. The ship *Lion* brought him over, as it did the two Harrises, Thomas and William. From the time of his arrival here until his banishment, he was in Massachusetts Bay Colony and nowhere else, except the short time at Plymouth in 1631. In April, 1635, he was on trial for heresy, which was continued from time to time, until October 9, 1635, when he was sentenced to be banished. He stayed at his house until about December 25, when he fled to avoid arrest. He says, in his writings: "For fourteen weeks I did not know what bread or meat meant." In these words, practically, this remark has been frequently quoted. If, now, he was so harassed by the authorities, and fourteen weeks a poor lone wanderer, he was not getting a company together to settle elsewhere, and I want some one to show me where he so states it in his writings or where he even attempted it, as did Parson Newman, Deacon Paine and others for the Rehoboth settlement, Codrington and others for Portsmouth and Newport, Gorton and others for Warwick. As Artemus Ward once said: "Produce the document, gents, jest produce the document."

If anything is clear, it is that Mr. Williams was so occupied in other matters that he could not, and in his circumstances just then he did not, so organize a company.

William Arnold, William Harris and others had formed themselves into a company and had decided to settle out-

side of the Colonial limits of Massachusetts Bay. They had sent a party ahead for the purpose of selecting a site. This party was at Seekonk. They had examined the land on the other side of the river and, while doing so, Mr. Williams joined them. An agreement was entered into with Mr. Williams, as he had been in hard luck the past year, to do the writing and bargaining with the Sachems for his one share in the purchase and they would furnish the means to pay for the land, which they did, as Mr. Williams acknowledges in his Initial Deed, and also by his receipt for £18, 11s, 3d. How, then, can an agent, which Mr. Williams clearly was, by his own admission, be today considered the "Sole Founder." I thought those that bought the land were the "Founders." After using the money for this purpose, did he do right to take that deed in his own name only and then refuse to satisfy the company for nearly thirty years with a satisfactory deed? I ask, is this the right way to build up a state or to invite peace? I tell you truly it was a sorry day for those twelve men when they first had anything to do with Mr. Williams, and a sadder day when they appointed or allowed him to act as their agent in the "Land Purchase."

Messrs. Harris and Arnold and the others were perfectly right in their conduct. I see in no place where these men, so far as they are concerned or interested in this purchase, were not perfectly right or just. I charge Mr. Williams with being, in a great measure, responsible for all the trouble and dissension at Providence. I charge further that had these twelve men left Mr. Williams out of their company entirely they would have been far better off and all the disgrace and ill things that are said or have been written of Providence can be laid in a great measure to the

door of Mr. Williams' conduct. I charge that these men today who are holding him up as a pattern are totally ignorant of the recorded evidence of his day. I shall ventilate this Deed business before I have done this paper and I shall ask every person here present if they would except such a paper from their agent as a right and satisfactory way of doing business. Yet this is only one count. The "patent" is another atrocity. If a confirmed wrangler and disputer and general disturber of the peace makes a Founder then deliver me from such a one as history shows Mr. Williams to be.

It is claimed that Mr. Williams named Providence. By the family memorandum, which the Arnold family brought from England with them, which paper carefully recorded the births of Thomas Arnold's family, two of which members came to America in the persons of William and Thomas. Here, after the record of their births, is the date of the sailing from Dartmouth, Eng., and the arrival at Boston. The matter recorded is a good voucher for its accuracy and value. On this paper this date is added thus: "Memorandum. We came to Providence to dwell April 20, 1635."

We call attention that this is written at the time and at the end of the time of Mr. Williams' "Wandering in the Wilderness." If he had been so destitute that he knew neither bread nor meat he was not in a condition to be naming towns that is certain. This memorandum proves, then, that this Company whom Mr. Williams was allowed to join, and did so join in the spring of 1636, at Seekonk, had selected this place for a settlement and had named it "Providence."

I realize that many will say why disturb this now settled matter? Let Mr. Williams have the credit. I say no. I say read the original facts over and not only read them but thoroughly understand them as well and do not give credit to any one until it is clearly and most unmistakably proven that he is justly and honestly entitled to the honor.

I want first to say a word about "Soul Liberty." This term is used in a very careless manner and very indefinitely, and utterly misleads one who is curious enough to want to understand the true meaning thereof. Let me, therefore, make my own definition of the term, and in this sense I shall use it only in this paper.

To say that one man is its sole author and defender is to state a falsehood at

the start. The struggle of Soul Liberty is as old as that of the time of the human race upon this earth. It is only another term for individuality, selfhood and independence for each and all of earth's children.

The Reformation only brought this struggle out more conspicuously than it had before been presented. The Reformation was only a feature in the evolution of human progress, while Soul Liberty was the bed rock upon which the whole rested. The prime movement now took on a phenomenal growth and vigor. The surroundings of Europe kept the plant within certain bounds. Transplanted, however, into new and virgin soil, like America, has fashioned what is now the United States of America.

There is no tyranny so merciless, so autocratic, so despotic, so exacting, as a spiritual tyranny. The cruelties of of this tyranny have fathered more infernal crimes than that of all others combined unnumbered times. This fact was seen by our emigrant ancestors. They said to commence right here the Church and State must be separated and must be kept distinctly apart. This fact has been proven in the case of our own nation. Where the Church and State were more united, as in South America and Mexico, we see the condition of affairs when the two systems are compared.

This Soul Liberty, or Individuality, has made all the progression there has been made in human progress. Those nations in Europe, as well as in America, that used it the most, have progressed the most. This is the whole secret of Soul Liberty. In this sense I shall use it further on and want to claim that William and Benedict Arnold were its leaders and defenders here in Rhode Island, and they, not Roger Williams, should have the honor therefor.

* * * * *

Benedict Arnold, the eldest son of William and Christian (Peake) Arnold, was born at Leamington, Eng., December 21, 1615. He came to this country in 1635, sailing from Dartmouth May 1, and arriving at Boston the 24th of the June following. His father's family consisted of six persons: viz., William Arnold, his wife Christian, two sons, Benedict and Stephen and two daughters, Elizabeth and Joanna. By a family paper now in existence we learn they came to Providence to dwell April 20, 1636. This is the oldest paper in existence, where the name "Providence" can be found, as applied to this city in Rhode Island.

It is not our intention to raise questions either of religious faith or political controversy, only so far as to state points needed to more fully explain matters now not generally known or as clearly understood as they should be by the well informed of our State.

At the time of the emigration, the art of printing had so far revolutionized society that questions of faith and the books in which the authority had been written, which before was known or understood by the priests only, had now become more known to the people and had been studied to such an extent that doubts had arisen on many scriptural dogmas, which had called forth the Reformation. The command, or entreaty, had gone forth, "Search the Scriptures," which was being done faithfully by those who could now read the Bible.

Among those nations that had followed this advice England stood in the front rank. The very makeup of this nation commanded each individual to act and think for himself. This trait has always been characteristic, i. e., the individuality of each son and daughter of England. With such a ground rock the Romish faith could never gain such great ascendancy, as it could in nations more accustomed to defer their wishes to and on other shoulders than their own.

This spirit of independence, individuality and self-reliance was fully at work and had been gathering force for some time previous to 1635. To the more daring it piloted them across the Atlantic, there to set up a new form of government more to their own way of thinking.

Among those English families that had become imbued with this principle and had taken as well the emigration fever were the Arnolds of Leamington. They were more happily placed than many others, because they had the means to gratify the wish.

After carefully considering the matter, as well as carefully counting the cost thereof, in 1635, the plan was carried out by resolving to build up a new family and a new individuality in the new world, then a wilderness, and whose great resources were not even dreamed of by England's most expert idealists.

Being a family of culture, and having been surrounded for centuries with the best thought of the age, as well as the best scholarship, they were in a position to understand and did as fully understand the leading questions of the day. Yes, better than any other one

family that came to Rhode Island at that time.

The points in controversy with Mr. Williams in Massachusetts were clear to them. The thought that came to them in England was more clearly proven here. They saw clearly to succeed here with any form of government, or to band themselves under any compact, or under any forms, the first thing to be settled, and settled definitely, was to separate the functions of the Church and the State.

Here comes in the first great conflict and here over this very distinction came the first clash of authority at Providence in the well known Verin case. Over this very case the Church and State issue was first raised.

The form in which it came up was whether the priest or husband was the master of the house and family. Mr. Verin wished his wife's company evenings, after he had returned from his customary day's work. He had so expressed himself to his wife and she had complied with the wish. Being asked why she did not attend service she truthfully told the reason.

Mr. Williams was the head of the Church party at Providence. This point is conceded. Now that he was placed in the same position as those Massachusetts Ministers were he had a chance to show his mettle and just how much of a spiritual tyrant or liberal leader he could be. This, also, will be conceded. What did he do in this case? Nothing. So far as I have read Mr. Williams is silent and not a word pro or con has been recorded as his opinion in the matter.

William Arnold, on the other hand, stood up for Verin and manfully defended him in the matter. He held as long as Verin and his wife were agreed in the matter and as long as they conducted themselves as respectable people should that the matter of worship was theirs, to do in such manner and form as best pleased them. This further interference of the priest, under any form, or through any pretext, direct or indirect, was one of the great reasons that had compelled them to set up a home here in this wilderness, where they could be free from this very interference.

The position he took formed the two parties. The Church, Mr. Williams, leader. The State, Mr. Arnold, leader.

The "Civil Compact" that soon followed this affair can now be seen came from this Verin matter. The Compact showed certainly the strength of the State Party by the signatures, and

while William Arnold's name is not there, he being probably at Boston at this time, his son Benedict placed his name on this paper, now immortal as the first public declaration of "Eternal separation of Church and State," as referring to Civil and Political Affairs.

It will here be seen that the idea of this separation was not an idea of Mr. Williams but of Arnold. It is an honor, therefore, for me to record that the first time the name of the subject of this sketch appears on a public paper in this Colony it appears on one of a character like this, and to know he and his father were its authors.

Whither the commencement of the coolness between Arnold and Williams arose from this difference only or came from the natural jealousy that one leader has for a rival or from a still later development, or whither the three had their part, the reader may decide to suit his judgment.

In the separation matter Williams was badly defeated is self evident to any discerning mind who had once grasped the true facts in the case and weighed them as he should.

The next question to test the leadership of Mr. Williams and to test his Honor as well as the matter in the procuration of the Indian Deed. The charge that Harris made on Williams' Honor was the keynote of that great controversy. Apologists for Williams have misrepresented or totally ignored Mr. Harris' claim.

This is a poor way to build up a reputation for any one. So long as the land question is left silent and not even referred to then so long is Mr. Williams' leadership safe. The very moment, however, some of these things are looked at in their true light then his leadership can be called into question seriously.

The Providence Land Question now comes forward, and now comes forward in such a way and manner that even Mr. Williams' most devoted apologist has not dared to take it up and defend him. As the Arnold family were the largest landholders in the colony, of course this question was of vital interest and concern to them. They became from the first the leaders on this question.

The remark said to have been made by Mr. Williams' son Daniel, when his father had become an old man and very infirm, "Had Mr. Williams been as shrewd and as far sighted as some others had been today they would have been his servants and not his master," has a sinister meaning when once the

land question is critically looked into

The deed from Canonicus and Miantonomo is to Roger Williams alone, as will be seen by looking at the said instrument.

It now appears by an agreement printed on page 20, Vol. I, Colonial Records of Rhode Island, that he agreed with his twelve partners to procure the deed of those lands between the two rivers and had agreed to pay the Indians £30 for the same. By this receipt at the bottom of this printed page it appears two-thirds practically had been paid in by his receipt for £18, 11s, 3d.

Now comes in the "Initial Deed" of Mr. Williams, which was a curious deed to say the least. I would like to have a candid answer from any one of Mr. Williams' apologists of today to just answer the question, Would he be satisfied with such a deed and would he consider his agent was treating him honest in giving him such a one? In other words, can a good conveyancer be named today who would recommend or even countenance such a deed for a partnership conveyance?

The answer is certainly, No. It was natural then that Mr. Williams' partners were not satisfied with it. It was not until nearly thirty years had passed that a deed was had from him that proved satisfactory.

If a historian can venture an opinion upon such a fact it would be that in all fairness after he had procured the deed from the Indian Chieftains that he then should have within a reasonable time thereafter transferred to his partners the very paper he did thirty years afterwards so transfer. Thirty years would not be considered a reasonable time by any means to any one conversant in law. A more reasonable time would be within thirty days.

In one sense the Township was a partnership; in another sense it was not. Mr. Williams' course was such that a difference soon arose, which became bitter as the Harris' episode demonstrates.

To show that these men were not going to be again lead into any misunderstanding about their deeds we call attention to the Loquissett deed of 1646, wherein it is stated: "I Ousamequin, Chief Sachem," etc. * * * "Do make over unto Roger Williams and Gregory Dexter, inhabitants of Providence, together with all those inhabitants of Providence that hath or shall join in this purchase.—Col. Rec. of R. I., I, 31.

In the Portsmouth deed Canonicus and Miantonomo sell to Mr. Coddington

ion, and his friends united with him (Ibid I 45).

In the Warwick deed Miantonomo sells to Randall Holden, John Greene, John Wicks, Francis Weston, Samuel Gorton, Richard Waterman, John Warner, Richard Carder, Sampson Shotton, Robert Potter, William Wuddall (Ibid I 131).

If the reader cares to go further it will be seen that all Indian Deeds covering Rhode Island territory are drawn direct to the partners and not one to the agent, except this single one of Mr. Williams.

It will also be noticed that the partners each wanted to know just where his share was, and to so have it that he could dispose of it as he pleased, to whom he pleased and when he pleased. The deeds we have cited, as soon as the surveyor had determined the lines, were so allotted that each man knew his own, excepting Mr. Williams' Providence deed.

Mr. Williams so managed that it first separated the Providence Company. The Township of Moshapaug, or that part of the now city of Providence covered by a line following the course of the Woonasquatucket River, from Manton to its mouth, at Fields Point, if it can be carried down so far, for a north and east line all that land, therefore, south and west, come in for a New Division, but before this had gathered strength enough to be a trespass it was seen Mr. Williams' deed covered it, so they moved so far north as to take in that land lying between Williams' line from Fields' Point to the North Bend of the Pocasset River, on the north side, and Pawtuxet River on the south. The Town of Mashapaug now became the town of Pawtuxet, and hence caused Mr. Arnold's removal from Mashapaug to Pawtuxet.

The men of Pawtuxet, who belonged also to the Providence Company, as did also those men concerned in the Loquisett purchase, insisted that the deeds should distinctly name the grantees, which they did, as we have above shown.

Mr. Williams' chief reason for the delay among others was to determine if the Indians themselves understood a "Land Conveyance" in the same light as the English did, was a good and strong reason for delay. He busied himself for years, learning their language and making notes thereon. These notes he later incorporated into his "Key to the Indian Language."

While Mr. Williams was doing this his partners were not idle by any

means. Benedict Arnold, for one, was as good an Indian Scholar as Williams. There can be no disputing this point, when his life is fully understood. Thomas Stanton's knowledge of the Indian language can be also cited and the fact that he held the Office of "Indian Interpreter" and not a Rhode Islander. Exactly. He had strong reasons for knowing the Narragansett tongue.

Abundant proof is shown that others of the Colonists besides these named had early obtained a knowledge of this tongue.

If Mr. Williams relied only on this as an excuse it was available only for a very few years at the most. Gorton threw in another firebrand when he raised the question of authority.

Just a word here about the question of Authority that Gorton raised. It is well known that upon all questions in those days the Bible was quoted and the point at issue was much befogged thereby and often near by obscured. It is a good plan (at least it has mine) to strike out every scriptural expression or allusion and read the rest. By so doing I have gained a better conception of the matter. Applying this rule to Mr. Gorton I understand the point raised to be simple. He had as good and legal authority to buy lands of the Indians as Mr. Williams. He and his partners could make such rules and regulations as they pleased with as much legal authority from the king as Mr. Williams. This is the whole matter and it cannot be denied. Mr. Williams himself so acknowledged it by hastening to the source of power to obtain a "Patent."

Mr. Gorton and his partners never went into the "Patent" arrangement without having it clearly understood that they were to have equal voice and authority in the matter of all legislation for the two settlements which had either to be granted or lose his assistance. Mr. Williams, refusing at first to do this, or delaying it, as he did, his deed left them at perfect liberty to apply to Massachusetts and Plymouth for protection. Mr. Williams had no power to stop them. It was perfectly legitimate and right. It was not to be supposed they were to wait Mr. Williams' pleasure for thirty years, as his friends did in the deed matter. Mr. Williams' friends have told his story. I should dearly love the pleasure to tell the other side of the affair and to talk from the original documents themselves and will do so at the first chance I get.

This question Mr. Williams settled by hastening to England for the "pa-

tent." When he returned with this there was another strong discontent and dissatisfaction, for he had wiped the Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick Colonies entirely out and called it simply "Providence Plantation in the Narragansett Bay in New England."

Please look the paper up in the Colonial Records (I, pp 143-146.)

That each one of the original four towns had equal and exact power and privilege was all that gave the "Patent" a trial.

It is needless to go beyond here into details, but this much is in order: that when a new charter was wanted Mr. Williams did not go alone. Things were better understood this time and provided for.

By now referring to the Providence Land Controversy, Mr. Williams' apologists have stated that many of the Pawtuxet or Harris papers were lost with Mr. Harris. Does any one think that Mr. Harris was so thoughtless as to take the only papers with him and thus endanger his whole estate, in case anything should happen to him. If he does then dismiss that thought, because Mr. Harris was one of the best business men in the Colony. He had a good understanding of the law and was a fine penman. While it may be true that he had a few originals with him, it can safely be assumed good copies were left behind when he went to Europe and that if these afterwards were lost then he was not chargeable, but his heirs and custodians.

Whatever has been said about Mr. Harris not complimentary we have no wish here to refer to. It is the only part he played in this land question, in insisting upon Mr. Williams giving him and his companions a proper conveyance, so that they might transfer, sell or otherwise dispose of their share, without having a cloud upon it or its legality questioned. By insisting that the "Initial Deed" was not a proper deed, or not a satisfactory deed, we do not see wherein he was wrong and we think Mr. Williams was not himself doing right by not giving his deed in a more proper manner and in a reasonable time after he had got his own from the Indian chieftains.

Mr. Harris was a man of strong passions and of just such a temperament as to sternly insist on the contract being carried out as agreed.

The Arnold's sided with Harris in the matter of the "Initial Deed" and thought it was not a satisfactory paper. Mr. Williams' continual refusal or neglect to write a new one did not tend to

harmonize matters, but rather made things so much the more complicated.

We have now to write out the result. Providence, as a Colony, was killed and became an utter failure. Pawtuxet, Warwick, Loquissett, Rehoboth settlements flourished. Providence was dead so long as it followed Williams and commenced to live when it did what the other colonies did arrange their land matters in such a way as to let each planter know his own as soon as his deed was in his possession.

To still further clinch this thought, we beg leave to refer the reader to the Providence Records themselves, and very particularly do we refer to that portion of them called "Land Evidence," and to the date of the recording of that Evidence. We also refer that recorded evidence where the selectmen record the fact of their ruin and disaster and seem to lament they were not as prosperous as the other surrounding colonies in Rhode Island.

The Arnold family, in my view, did just the right thing. They and Mr. Williams parted company. They, with others, procured deeds of the Indians and then divided the purchase without delay, so that each man knew just what was his. As to the wherefore of Mr. Williams' conduct, in withholding the deed so long, we know nothing more than the good excuse we have above named and another that from the nature of the case strong words must have been passed between the parties concerned, which planted the bitterness of opposition deeply on both sides. Mr. Williams grew obstinate and did not do what he was urged to do until he saw ruin so clearly defined before him that he had even in self defense to do what he should have done nearly thirty years before.

As we have taken up so much space over this deed it may be well now that the reader's curiosity is aroused to insert here the deed itself as printed in Colonial Records, I, 19.

Memorandum. That I. R. W., having formerly purchased of Canonieus and Miantonomo, this our situation or plantation of New Providence, viz., the two fresh rivers, Wonas and Moosh, and the grounds and meadows thereupon, in consideration of £30 received from the inhabitants of said place, do freely and fully pass, grant and make over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the same grounds and lands unto my loving friends and neighbors S. W., W. A., T. J., R. C., J. G., J. T., W. H., W. C., T. O., F. W., R. W. and E. H. and such others as the major

part of us shall admit into the same fellowship of vote with us. As, also, I do freely make and pass over equal right and power of enjoying and disposing the said land and ground reaching from the aforesaid rivers into the great river Pawtuxet, with the grass and meadow thereupon, which was so lately given and granted by the two aforesaid Sachems to me.

Witness my hand, R. W.
This is dated 8th, 8 mo., 1638 (Oct. 8, 1638).

Mr. Williams' full deed is dated Providence 22d, 10 mo., 1666 (Dec. 22, 1666).

In this latter deed the names are written out as follows: Stutely Westcott, William Arnold, Thomas James, Robert Cole, John Greene, John Throckmorton, William Harris, William Carpenter, Thomas Olney, Francis Weston, Richard Waterman and Ezekiel Holyman.

What caused this change in Mr. Williams? The coming disaster that was inevitable and the despair that now possessed the settlers of ever getting the wrong righted. Already had the settlement lost its wealthiest and most influential members. Plans had been matured for a second great emigration from the place to Oyster Bay, while others were thinking of moving elsewhere in the colony limits. Every one of the settlements were growing but Providence.

A few years previously an order had been passed by the Providence Selectmen and Freemen (March, 1662), in open town and council meeting, that the "Land Evidence" be recorded in the Town Book and also in the book of the General Recorder.

This brought up the old question in all its vividness and strength. The question was now seriously asked by each supposed land holder how he could record a conveyance that had no warrantee behind it. In other words could his deed be a good one when his own purchase was questioned. The emigration fever, the deep unrest, the loss of influence, the marks of disrespect even shown all so alarmed Mr. Williams that he at last yielded and did what he should have done nearly thirty years before.

Mr. Williams' apologists may say what they will yet they cannot wash out the fact that Mr. Williams was in this matter a very unwise as well as a very impractical man. One in his position should have had a pride in giving as good guarantees as that of any other colony. He never should have

driven away from him his ablest men. He should have attracted them towards him and have striven to build up a confidence in his leadership and integrity and not the distrust which he did so effectually.

Among those he drove out were the Arnolds. Benedict went to Newport, where he at once was placed in offices of trust and responsibility. For nearly a quarter of a century he was a leading man in the Councils of the Colony and most of that time its chieftain. His method of business attracted settlers. They knew just what they were purchasing and just what dangers there were to dispute the title. Had this man been allowed to do for Providence what he did for Newport then methinks the history of this plantation would now have had a different reading.

A great stress has been laid upon Mr. Williams as a "Peace-maker," "Organizer," "Diplomat" and "Business Man." I do not want to be too set or opinionated, but the more I have studied that period of history the further I have drifted from Mr. Williams.

I have shown in the "Verin Case" that Mr. Williams has left no recorded opinion. In the matter of "Church and State" he has left also no recorded opinion, while the Arnolds stand forth as its defenders and champions. So they, and not Mr. Williams, are the champions of "Soul Liberty;" hence, therefore, honestly and justly entitled to that high honor.

The terms I have just used as applied to Williams of Peace-maker, Organizer, Diplomat and Business Man, by his apologists, are so used by men who really knew nothing of the man as he really was. This deed business of itself destroys his reputation. As I have here contended had he as soon as he had got his deed from the Sachems turned around and wrote the deed he did in 1666, he would have been far better entitled to the terms than he now is. Had he bought the Plantation with his own money he would have had a strong reason for his conduct, but he acted as an agent and says as much in the deed. Then why not still act as agent and account as an honest agent should to his employers. Mr. Williams can offer no just or reasonable excuse for his conduct as an honest and just man. He and his apologists cannot throw stones at Harris, Arnold, Gorton and others on being pessimistic or obstinate because Mr. Williams has shown throughout the entire deed business as much temper and unjust conduct as the others; yes, more so, because they were

in the right and were by every sense of the term justly and honestly entitled to all they claimed. If Mr. Williams had been possessed of the first principle of diplomacy even he should have at once disarmed them by doing what he knew to be the right and honest thing to do to have written that deed with full names the very day it was so demanded of him to be so written.

It is pertinent to ask right here in this very place who was first responsible for the ill opinions and contempt that has been recorded against the Rhode Island Colony by the early annalists of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, New Haven and Connecticut Colonies. Do they not say in so many words that the same conduct that made him unpopular with them was making him unpopular here, and do they not say he was not an honest but a very unwise and impractical man. They call him a "Visionary" with not the talent to build up the castle himself or to attract others to help him. All of this is true and a just estimate of the man.

Benedict Arnold contended that the Colony should have the same respect shown it that was shown the other English Colonies in all official utterances. He insisted and won. Look over his correspondence, reader, with our neighboring colonies and see if not this is true. Give this man the honor then of first making his Colony respected among others. Governor Cranston followed in his footsteps and so did the succeeding Governors after him. It was this man who thus planted those seeds that made our Colony the leader in the war of the Revolution, originated its navy and furnished her first commanders and also furnished a General that was next in rank to the great Virginian.

Contrast this record with Mr. Williams' record, supposing him to have died before he had given a proper deed. The result had this happened would have been something serious. Settled it as they would Williams' name would have been infamous is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt.

What has been before written has been to prove the more conclusively what we have now to write to the more conclusively show that if Mr. Williams for what he has done is now justly entitled to the honor that is today paid to his name and memory then logically what another did that equalled, yes far excelled. Mr. Williams should also have a mead of honor as his just and honest due.

Having now shown that Providence was an utter failure as a settlement under the Williams leadership if it can be so assumed and proving it by referring to the recorded evidence in the Records of Providence itself where the fact is so acknowledged it is now pertinent to prove that our hero did not fall into similar blundering or mistakes if that word sounds better.

Mr. Ryder in No. 4, Second Series Rhode Island Historical Tracts, produced a pamphlet "Concerning the Forgeries of the Sachems Deed". This tract was attempted to be answered but it did not remove the ugly charges Mr. Ryder made. How far these ugly facts that Mr. Ryder points out influenced Mr. Williams in his "Initial Deed" cannot now be accurately determined but if we assume Mr. Williams wanted to be "tricky" and "do" his "loving friends" did he not therefore try it on first with the Sachems and his wait was to see how long it would be before they too would find it out. We write the above thought to show how Mr. Williams' "Great Diplomatic Land Scheme" has been looked upon by one critical historical scholar of today. We now ask where ever has a land transaction that the Arnolds negotiated with those same Sachems been similarly handled today? Where Mr. Williams wrote one deed they wrote scores and where has one of them been questioned? Here is thrown into the faces of Mr. Williams' apologists a direct challenge to produce the proof that Mr. Ryder may perform the like service towards them.

We now will reach up a little higher and show how our hero did business. All history substantiates what we are now about to write.

When the Charter of King Charles was first promulgated here as the "Supreme Law of the Land" Benedict Arnold was named Governor. With him was named Assistants of his way of thinking so that his party controlled all Legislation and his party therefore were responsible and should be so held for all mistakes, oversights or blunders. The fame or the infamy was theirs and theirs only.

If now this "Charter" proved as disastrous as Mr. Williams' "Patent" then both parties could divide honors. The "Patent" never was satisfactory from the first. The four to was divided for two years over it and requited only until a more satisfactory one could be had from the King which delay was caused by the disturbed state of political affairs at home.

How was the "Charter" received? In the same way as the "Patent" had been. We refer the curious reader to the two records. The first was very unsatisfactory as the Colonial Records as printed clearly show. The "Charter" was waited to see how it would work. As the years passed in their regular courses the people had more and more respect for their "Great State Paper." A greater compliment cannot be paid to that State paper than this. From July 4, 1776, to May, 1843, the people of this State lived under it, preferring it to any of the State Constitutions adopted by the other States of the Union. Not one other of the so-called "Royal Charters" has had this honor bestowed upon it.

Washington has been referred to as a great statesman. Upon what grounds, may we ask? Was he not the first President, and did he not set up in his administration the working of the National Constitution? True. Did it not take sure judgment and great skill to do it successfully? True. Then upon these grounds has he shown his statesmanship and abilities as a political leader and chieftain just as clearly as he has demonstrated his great military skill and ability during the war of the Revolution.

If this question has been properly answered by these remarks then why not apply the same measure to our "First Administration under the Charter," and acknowledge that our "First Governor" proved his statesmanship and ability under like circumstances.

By so nominating him the king acknowledged he was the most able man in the Colony to do the work assigned him. The king in sizing up the two men gave Williams the inferior position. While he was the older man, being now in the sixties, he had not shown the fine administrative abilities of the younger man, Benedict Arnold.

In setting up, therefore, the "Charter Government" successfully our governor is justly entitled to high honor. That he held his position is proven by the public positions he held while a resident of Newport. That he was a man of influence can be shown at that period in Philips' War where the then Colonial administration passed an act to invite the ex-Governor before them for his advice and counsel which was taken gladly. Had it been taken sooner then the disaster that did overtake the Colony would have been avoided far better than it was. The fact that the governor was right is proven still more clearly by again calling him to the executive chair and keeping him there

until death removed him forever from the position, June 19, 1878.

That his loss was deeply felt is shown by the remarks of Rev. Mr. Hubbard who said his funeral was the largest that had ever been known in the Colony.

His character has remained unspotted. His abilities cannot be questioned. There cannot be produced today a critic that has made himself familiar with the political questions of those days that can stain the record of this man. There cannot be shown a single transaction of real estate where his honesty has been questioned or over which has ever been raised a contention. That he had an opportunity can be shown by his treatment of his brother Stephen.

The Governor, seeing trouble breeding and knowing the feeble condition of his father, then an aged man, persuaded him (the father) to take up his residence with him until the troubles should pass away, which invitation was accepted. The old man died at his son's house in Newport and died without a will thus throwing the large estate into the hands of the eldest son. The venerable man had expressed a wish that Stephen should have all the Warwick lands after his death. Benedict pledged that if anything occurred that made a different disposal if he was alive Stephen should have just what his father wished him to have out of the estate, which obligation he carried out and in a reasonable time after his father's death the deed was executed and never has been questioned since its execution. Compare this deed with the "Initial Deed," reader, and say then who showed the best business tact and ability. Here was a paper so drawn that it could not be questioned and none was ever raised over it.

This treatment of his brother Stephen has done much to show up the truly noble and sterling qualities of the man. His word was as good as his bond. Stephen had just what his father wished him to have, will or no will.

The same high qualities of nobility and honor run all through his life work both public and private. He set as fine an example of a pattern of what a true man ought and should be as did our venerated Washington. He carried the Colony through as dire perils. He saved her from insult and annihilation, and made her respected by the other and neighboring colonies. The correspondence with both Connecticut and Massachusetts prove this to every candid reader who will look up and read that correspondence.

This paper was not intended solely for a lecture, essay or biography of our First Governor but is intended solely to call attention to the public record of the man and to especially call attention to its purity and statesmanship.

Having accomplished so much cannot we ask that the resting place of such a man be respected as he wished it to be? Cannot we ask in strict justice that our state today take measures to more fitly and properly mark his last resting place and provide better care for it than it has yet received in the past?

The matter of the better preservation of this sacred place is now before the General Assembly for action. That they will finally act intelligently there can be no question and that they will pass suitable resolutions to more carefully preserve in the future than there has been in the past this burial place and thus carry out his wishes as expressed in his will which wishes are also the wishes today of all his living descendants so far as I have been able to learn from those who have learned what the Governor's real opinions and wishes were in the matter.

If the apparent hitch that is now between the family and the state can be removed I am satisfied the rest is easy. There is no doubt the family members would cheerfully do their part towards a better preservation when once they are satisfied they can do so with the satisfaction of fully carrying out this most desirable intention with the power and authority of the state behind them. For one member now to act is to invite trouble and insult from the adjoining proprietors on two sides, at least, who wish to drive the burials off so as to usurp the place. This has been going on now for about seventy years.

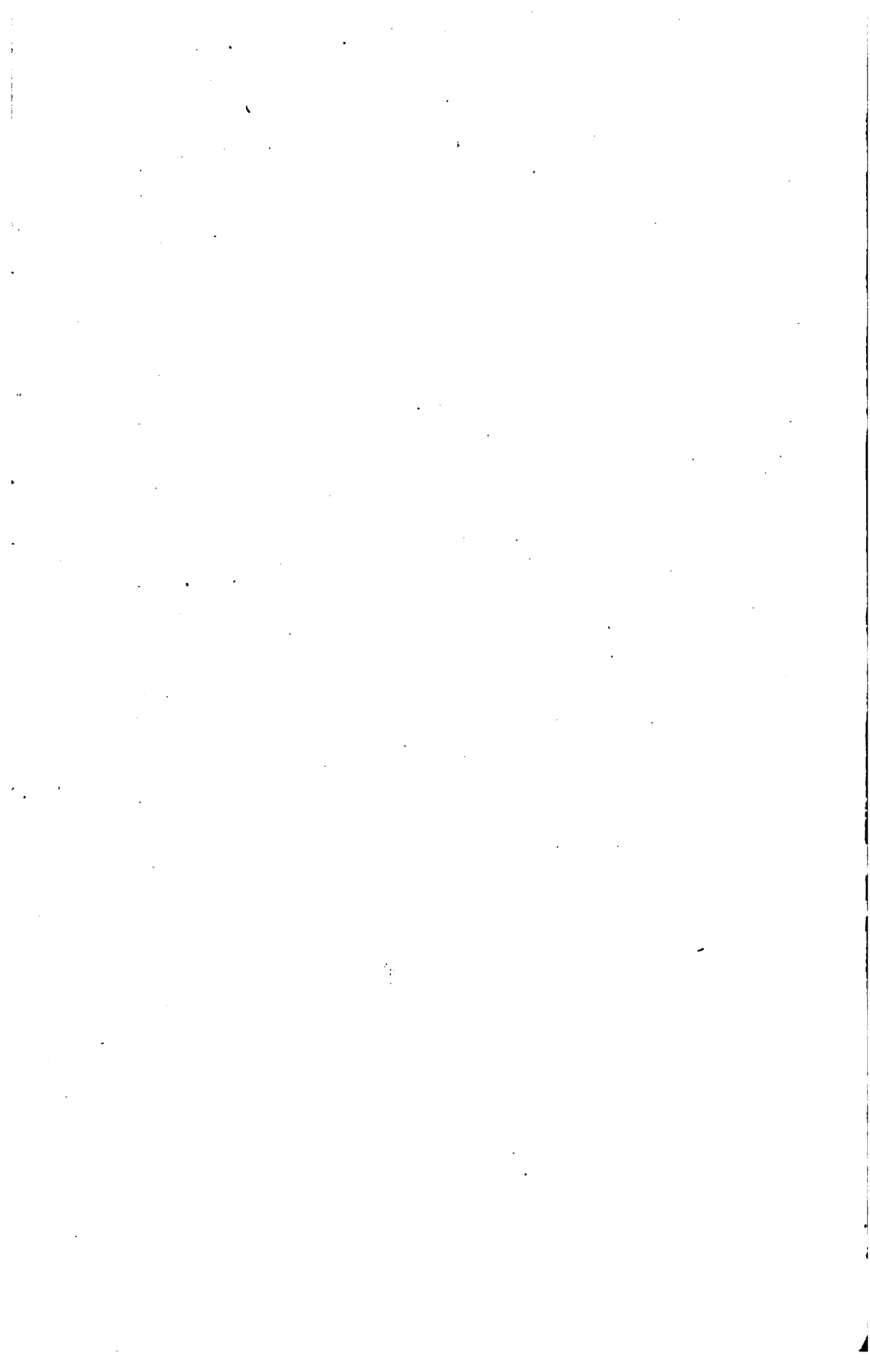
To be just and fair on all sides it is not the right nor the proper thing to do

to allow this place to remain as it is today. It is not treating these adjoining proprietors right. They show no respect to the place because others, and especially those who should, do not. As no deed could properly be given of the place and as the General Law expressly forbids desecration of burial grounds the only proper thing in this case considering the wishes of our first governor and his distinguished services is to properly curb, grade and fence it and place the same under a perpetual care. This can be done without damaging any adjoining estate and so done that it would rather increase the value of those very estates around it.

If all these sacred places in this town could be better preserved and placed under perpetual care it would no doubt inspire some future son or daughter to more fully write up the old town's history and thus give honor to whom the honor is due. Newport has a history that can not be taken from her. She alone is to be blamed if she suffers it to be forgotten. I trust the good people will commence now and insist that our first governor's resting place must be better respected in the future and then not stay the good work until all the other sacred places have also the same careful eye placed over them.

It would indeed be a noble commencement to place in this yard of our first governor a memorial reciting the fact that his father William was also laid here so that the inscription on the memorial could read something like this:

Within this enclosure lie the remains of William Arnold, Champion and Leader of Soul Liberty in this Colony. Also his son Benedict First Governor under the Charter. The Builder and Preserver of Rhode Island.



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